

TOUGH love

by Master Sgt. Chuck Roberts
photo by Master Sgt. Scott Wagers

Staff Sgt. Yolandra Rodriguez enjoyed 11 years in the missile maintenance career field. But she wanted something more — the opportunity to make a difference in a personal way.

Today, the military training leader provides guidance and direction for Airmen in technical school. Many 18-year-olds are still in transition from being away from home for the first time, and need help dealing with a new world of issues, both personal and professional.

Even though she's long-removed from her days as a young Airman, Sergeant Rodriguez tries to put herself in their shoes to help lead the way. That doesn't always mean just lending a sympathetic ear and a pat on the back. Sometimes it calls for tough love and pointing out the cold, hard facts of life. It doesn't come easily, but she knows it's what some people need. And so do they — perhaps not until afterward in some cases. For the past two years, she's received e-mails monthly from Airmen who state her sometimes stern advice was just what they needed.

"That's when you know you touched someone," she said. 🦋

"You can't go home with Airmen standing at your door with tears in their eyes. They depend on you."

Staff Sgt. **Yolandra Rodriguez**
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